

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

Ceantar Bardasach Bhaile Locha Riach *Municipal District of LOUGHREA*

Minutes of Monthly Meeting of the Municipal District of Loughrea held in the Galway Council Chamber on 10th October 2022 at 11.00 am

I LATHAIR:

Cathaoirleach

Cllr. P.J. Murphy

Bail:

Cllr's. G. Donohue, M. Kinane, S Curley,
I. Canning, J. McClearn, M. Maher, G Finnerty, D.
Kelly, J. Byrne

Oifigigh:

Ms. E. Ruane, Director of Services
Ms. R. Lowe, Senior Engineer
Mr. G. Haugh, Senior Executive Engineer
Mr. J. Coyle, Executive Engineer
Mr. N. Kennedy, Executive Engineer
Mr. E. Gallagher, Senior Executive Engineer
Ms. A. Quinn, Senior Staff Officer
Ms. S. Cleary, Staff Officer
Ms. P. McHugo, Assistant Staff Officer

Cllr. Murphy requested all present to stand in silence for 1 minute in memory of the victims of the Creeslough tragedy which occurred on 7th October 2022 at the Applegreen Service Station, Creeslough, Co. Donegal.

Cllr. McClearn proposed opening a book of condolences in the Loughrea Municipal District Office in memory of those who lost their lives in Creeslough. The proposal was seconded by Cllr. Kelly.

Confirmation of Minutes of Monthly Meeting of the Municipal District of Loughrea held in the Loughrea Chamber on 12th September 2022 **LMD2248**

The Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the Municipal District of Loughrea held on 12th September 2022 were proposed by Cllr. Maher, seconded by Cllr. Finnerty and agreed and signed by the Cathaoirleach.

The Members thanked Ms. Donohue and Mr. Williams for their detailed presentations.

Cllr. Curley enquired if the time given to deputations can be increased, Cllr. Kelly stated that it is important to allow adequate time for deputations. Cllrs Donohue and Maher clarified that the allocation of time for deputations is set out in Standing Orders.

Cllr. Kinane referring to the Deputation stated that there was a divide in the community and between the Members with respect to the Greenway, she stated that she wished to make it clear that all parties are doing their best and that this is a very serious matter.

Cllr. Kinane proposed that a special meeting be arranged with Mr. Pender and the Project Team as soon as possible, where all information, emails and work is collated so that accurate answers can be provided by the Project Team to the Members on issues that need to be addressed. Cllrs Maher and Murphy seconded the proposal and all members agreed to meet with Mr. Pender, the Design Team and all the Liaison Officers that met with homeowners and landowners for the Greenway Project. Cllr. Finnerty and Cllr. Donohue requested that Minutes be taken at the meeting.

Following a discussion, it was agreed to arrange a meeting for Monday 17th October 2022 at 12 noon. Ms Ruane will follow this up with Mr. Pender.

Cllr. Donohue stated that she was disappointed that Mr. Pender and a representative from RPS were not present at Municipal District Meeting and stated that Mr. Kelly should attend a full plenary meeting as this is a matter which could affect other areas of Galway another time. Cllr. McClearn asked for clarity from Mr. Kelly regarding his opinion on the hybrid model. Cllr. McClearn acknowledged the work done by Mr. Pender on the Greenway and stated that the Members want to engage with the project team to deal with any outstanding issues on the Greenway. Cllr. Kelly stated that he cannot support the Greenway unless there is full and honest engagement with affected Landowners.

Cllr. Finnerty stated that there are many questions to be responded to, for example, safe passage across roads. He agreed with Cllr. Byrne who raised a concern regarding the proximity of the Greenway to private households. Cllr. Byrne stated that 'drastic situations need drastic measures' and there needs to be more engagement between the project office and affected landowners. Cllr. Byrne proposed a change in the team and stated the team review leadership roles.

Cllr. Maher proposed stopping the procedures until a Meeting is held with Mr. Kelly and Mr. Pender. In response to Mr. Maher's statement that he is unhappy with statistics being provided. Ms. Ruane clarified that statistics provided regarding the Greenway are accurate. Cllr. Maher highlighted that people have different concerns and questions requiring a response, Cllr. Maher wished to clarify that he had walked the Greenway route.

Cllr. Canning stated that, during the deputation, it was interesting to hear presenters are in favour of the Greenway and he repeated Mr. Williams' concern that Landowners want their children to be able to use it. Cllr. Canning stated that people want the Greenway to proceed but not in the format it is currently at, Cllr. Murphy agreed with Cllr. Canning who stated that he thinks a solution is possible. Cllr. Canning stated, with respect to Eyrecourt and Meelick, the Greenway is not beneficial to them as it is bypassing this area. Cllr. Murphy stated existing roads should be used to service local communities.

In response to Cllr. Curley's question regarding the Greenway traversing lands on which there are protected structures, Ms. Ruane confirmed that, should this be the case, the correct procedure would be followed.

Flooding Update

LMD2249

Mr. Enda Gallagher updated the meeting as follows: -

South Galway Gort Lowlands FRS – The Engineering consultant is advancing design and works proposals for flood alleviation at Roxborough and swallow hole testing at Tullira. The last borehole tests under the Ground Investigation contract will be completed in the next fortnight at Raheen, beside the M18. The proposals for new culverts on the N67 in Kinvara are being discussed with the NRPO.

The Environmental Consultants have completed many of their botanical surveys. A productive meeting was held last week with the NPWS where recent developments in the scheme were discussed. Engineering proposals are being reviewed and feedback from the agronomist is being examined.

Cllr Byrne asked that an updated programme for the scheme be presented at the next meeting.

Ballyboy – Mr Gallagher confirmed that funding has been secured to undertake the road raising working at Ballyboy. The availability of contractors to undertake the works during acceptable weather conditions is being explored. If the works are not undertaken this year, the funding will carry to next year.

Cllr Murphy asked that the existing surface of the road be improved if the overlay works are not progressing this year. The surface is currently in poor condition.

CFRAM Progress Report – Mr Gallagher confirmed he had forwarded the request to the OPW for an update with timeframes on Stage 2 of the CFRAM programme. No response has been received from the OPW to-date, but he expected a response will be available for the next MD meeting.

Cllr Finnerty asked if there was any update on the possibility of flood gates to close the road at Ballylee. Ms Lowe advised that she had not had an opportunity to consider the matter but would call to the location personally today and would liaise with Cllr. Finnerty.

Cllr Finnerty provided Mr Gallagher with the contact details of a landowner in the Peterswell area, who has an issue with a drain in the area.

Cathaoirleach's Business

LMD2250

Cllr. Curley asked for an update on when the grounds at Fairgreen would be reinstated now that works have been completed at the Courthouse in Loughrea. Mr. Haugh stated that he would follow up on this matter.

Cllr. Byrne commended Mr Kennedy and his team on works completed on Local Improvement Schemes and on the Roads Programme. He raised a concern regarding vegetation on some roads and asked if passing bays can be considered, he referred to a busy local road he visited in Gurraun, Maree where 2 cars could not pass each other. Mr. Haugh advised that he can

make arrangements for an inspection of these areas to be carried out and it might be possible for the works to be considered in the Roads Programme or C.I.S.

Cllrs. Byrne and Finnerty expressed their concerns regarding the smell of sewage in the Gort Area. Cllr. Byrne requested Mr. Kennedy to liaise with the appropriate section regarding manholes which are leaking sewage in the Area.

Cllr. Byrne requested an update from TII on a safety audit to be carried out at Ballinderreen School, he stated that a member of An Garda Siochana has to be present at the area for safety purposes.

Cllr. Finnerty advised that traffic is backing up on the Castletown Road, he stated that he sought additional signage from Irish Rail in March as the current signage is not adequate. Mr. Haugh responded by advising that signage is scheduled for installation within the next two weeks.

Cllr. Finnerty stated that signage in Gort needs to be looked at, Mr. Haugh advised the meeting that an assessment of signs requiring cleaning will be carried out, he further stated that an assessment of kerbs in Labane, which Cllr Finnerty also referred to which required to be painted, will be carried out.

In response to Cllr. Finnerty request regarding damaged broadband cables, Ms. Ruane stated that she would seek clarification from the Broadband Officer.

Cllr. Donohue acknowledged the works completed on the Gort River Walks and the installation of the new bridge.

Mr. Haugh, in response to Cllr. Donohue's query advised that the Loughrea Municipal District is winter ready. Ms. Lowe confirmed that the Winter Maintenance Programme is headed by Mr. Prendergast and his team are currently making the necessary preparations.

In response to Cllr. Byrne's query, Ms. Lowe stated that motorway flyovers are not the responsibility of TII, it will be brought to the attention of Mr. Prendergast for his review.

Cllr. McClearn enquired when cast iron pipes in Eyrecourt will be replaced, he stated that he raised the matter twice with Irish Water and members of the public in the mall are unhappy to use water if the pipes are cast iron.

Cllr Curley enquired about the location of the new Fire Station in Loughrea, Ms. Ruane advised that the process is going through a Part 8 application and other sites have been considered.

Any Other Business

LMD2251

Cllr. Murphy advised that a footpath needs to be provided from Ardrahan Village to the level crossing. Mr. Haugh advised that he reconsider this location and discuss further with Cllr. Murphy in the coming days.

Cllr. Murphy referred to a Notice from Galway County Council to build 10 social housing units in the village, he stated that provision should be made for Affordable Housing in the area, and he stated that people in the area are being refused planning permission for dwellings on their lands. He asked that this be brought to the attention of the Director in Housing.

Deputation: Stoney Island / Meelick & Kilcolgan / Ballindereen Reps of Landowners

Speaker 1: Tricha Donohue, Kilcolgan Greenway Action Group

Ms. Donohue addressed the members regarding her concerns and the concerns of her community in relation to the Greenway Project, mainly the lack of engagement with the community, accuracy of information and the threat of Compulsory Purchase Orders.

Ms. Donohue raised concerns regarding safety of persons using the proposed Greenway, safety landowners and homeowners, safety of animals and private property along the route. Ms. Donohue stated landowners have concerns regarding the effect the Greenway will have on planning applications.

Ms. Donohue advised the Members that the IFA signed off on the Code of Best Practice (COBP) but not all farmers are members of the IFA and not all landowners are farmers. Ms. Donohue requested clarification on how far the Greenway will be located from homes and properties. She stated that severance of farmlands will cause difficulties for farmers and referred to one farmer who was requested to draw silage to one side of the greenway during the day and then cross the greenway in the evening.

Ms. Donohue also requested clarification regarding areas along the Greenway which are prone to flooding and requested clarification on who will maintain the Greenway and clear away discarded rubbish on or along the route.

Ms. Donohue referred to a lack of facilities along the Greenway e.g., toilet facilities, car parking facilities and highlighted that the Greenway will cross busy roads 8 times (L Roads) between Kinvarra and Kilcolgan.

Speaker 2 : Evan Williams, East Galway Greenway Action Group

Mr. Williams addressed the members on his behalf and on behalf of the East Galway Greenway Action Group. He advised that the group is not against Greenways/Cycleways but that the group cannot support this particular Greenway/Cycleway in its current form, and it will bypass their village, shops, schools, churches and the children in the area will not be able to benefit from using it. He stated that this is a once in a generation opportunity to rejuvenate the local community and village. Mr. Williams highlighted the failings to date of engagement with property owners in the region who did not receive any form of consultation which is adding to undue stress and mental strain on property owners and landowners. He advised the Members that this project impacts the daily lives, mental health and wellbeing of landowners and homeowners. Mr. Williams referred to the potential benefits of adopting a hybrid model which works in other European Countries.

Mr. Williams stated that the community wants a Commuter Greenway that is beneficial to the local village and amenities, is for tourists and the local Community, does not adversely affect homes and lands used for commercial and farming activities. It is important that it is always safe for use including usage by the most vulnerable. He enquired if the Disabled Persons Organisation has been consulted.

Mr. Williams stated that the level of consultation to date has been insufficient, he stated concerns have not been acted on and the CPO process should not be used for this project. He requested a public meeting to provide a full breakdown on how all potential routes within the preferred corridor are being assessed.

CHRIOGHNAIGH AN CRUINNIU ANSIN

P.J. Murphy.

CLLR P.J. MURPHY
CATHAOIRLEACH, LOUGHREA MD